

**International Association for Religious Freedom
Commemorative Service
March 26, 2006**

Welcome

Mr. Abhi Janamanchi
Unitarian Universalist Association

Good Evening, and welcome to this sacred service of memory and hope. We gather this evening to remember those who have given great gifts of their vision and dedication to peace, justice and religious freedom through the years of this oldest of interfaith, international communities. We gather this evening to remember them, to take their vision forward, and to join our hands and hearts with the youth who look to us to build, with them, a world at peace. Please take your seats, and wait in silence for our opening devotions.

Opening Devotion and Procession

Monks of Fo Guang Shan
“Offering The Light”

Opening Words

President Ellen Campbell
Canadian Unitarian Council

We meet on Holy ground,
For that place is holy where we meet each other
Where lives touch, where love moves
Where hope stirs.

How strong is our need for one another
Our silent beckoning to our neighbours
Our invitation to share life and death together
Our welcome into the lives of those we meet,
And their welcome into our own.

Chalice Lighting

Vice President Thomas Mathew
Marthomite Christian Church

From the shadows through which we have come
We approach a light which reveals our faces
That we may read in each other's eyes
The love and compassion, the ardor and commitment.

More warmth, more understanding and cooperation shall
there be in me, in you, in all of us who come to this light
Which reveals in us our power to love, to hope, and to achieve.

Rev. Janamanchi

Mr. Eimert van Herwijnen, immediate past President of IARF and member of the Council will lead our ceremony of Celebration and Praise.

Tributes in Celebration and Praise

Mr. Eimert van Herwijnen

The International Association for Religious Freedom was created just over 100 years ago by religious leaders who believed the world would find new paths to peace if they could learn the model of love for one another. The idea of learning to grow from polite and infrequent encounter to deep religious understanding became our flame. What was once a Christian organization became a liberal Christian organization, but still a path to understanding and peace largely known only in the West.

But then, in the 1960s, religious leaders from the West met and found new light in the vision of religious leaders from the East, men whose faith in our human ability to heal, together, brought a new flame to the very heart of IARF. Tonight we pause to remember these men, to remember their vision for IARF, to be grateful for their presence in our midst, and to think on what their vision for us today would be, could they share this moment with us. IARF has asked five current leaders to remember five key leaders of the 1960s. After tribute has been offered to each, we will ask for others who have given their dedication to IARF over the years to be remembered as well.

To begin, I invite President William Sinkford of the Unitarian Universalist Association to remember Rev. Dr. Dana Greeley, first President of that faith tradition.

I invite Rev. Toban Takeshi Nishida of Ittoen to remember the founder of the Konko church of Izu, Rev. Toshio Miyake.

I invite Chairman Katsunori Yamanoi of the Rissho Kosei-kai to remember Founder Nikkyo Niwano of that faith tradition.

I invite Dr. Gene Reeves to remember Guji Yukitaka Yamamoto, 96th Chief Priest of the Tsubaki Grand Shrine.

I invite Rev. Richard Boeke to remember Dr. Sin'ichiro Imaoka, who inspired and assisted all of these men in their commitment to IARF.

Mr. van Herwijnen

Let us remember them well. Let us remember their gifts. Let us praise their names and their memory. I ask Mr. Shlomo Alon to bring the light forward through the years.

Candles of Celebration and Praise

Mr. Shlomo Alon

These men whom we uplift in this service did not work alone. And they were given help for and support to their vision of what IARF could become through the dedication of many hearts and hands. Through the past 40 years and more, many men and women have made profound contributions to the work of IARF. Let their names be spoken now. If you, who are here today to dream the future of IARF remember a man or a woman who has died and who made a significant contribution to IARF with his or her living and caring, I invite you to come forward at this time to light a candle of honor and to speak his or her name.

Names of those Remembered

Remembered by:

Mrs. Carolyn Howlett

Rev. Doris Hunter

Mr. Roy Chowdhary

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Ms. Bodanna Haspl

Rev. Polly Guild

Rev. Norbert Capek

Rev. Polly Guild

Rev. Malcolm Sutherland

Rev. Richard Kellaway

Mr. Alon:

I would ask Mrs. Angie Grappa, IARF Council member, to lead us in a prayer of thanksgiving. After each phrase she speaks, please respond by saying, in your own language,

“We remember them, may we lift up their light”

Responsive Prayer

Mrs. Angie Grapa

Bread of Life Ministries

They lived the horrors of a terrible war; they vowed to work for peace

Congregation: We remember them, we lift up their light

From many traditions around the world they built, together, a path to peace

Congregation: We remember them, we lift up their light

They sought mutual respect, human understanding; a human connection that can only be made when I face you and you face me, and we dare to say hello

Congregation: We remember them, we lift up their light

They dared to connect, to make concrete a path to trust, after we face one another, after we say hello.

Congregation: We remember them, we lift up their light.

They believed that for a world at peace, we would need to learn to love one another, They built up IARF to give us a place to do the work of learning to love beyond the safety of what we know.

Congregation: We remember them, we lift up their light.

Mr. Janamanchi:

Rev. Peronne Boddaert will join our young adults in bringing the sacred light forward.

Candles of Hope

Rev. Peronne Boddaert
Remonstrant Brotherhood

Their dream of peace and understanding, their work is now ours. Our work is not yet done. The future of the world is kept in our sacred trust for those who will come after us. Our leaders of today must look to our hopes for tomorrow to see a clear path for our work. I would call forward now two of IARF's young adult to speak of what they need us to do, what they need us to be, to ensure their hopes can become a reality.

Two young adults speak their vision of hope

Extending the Light

Rev Peronne Boddaert

Each of these young adults holds a candle lighting the way to the future they hold dear. In a moment they will come to each of you at the end of an aisle, and light your candle. Then each of you will light the candle of the person next to you and sit with the light and the silence until all the candles are lit. Please light your candle by tipping it toward the light of the candle already lit, so we do not damage the floor with candle wax.

Ms. Elly Kelly Baker will sing, "Honor The Ancient Ones" as we light our candles.

Rev. Boddaert:

These lights we have lit together
Each one helped by the light of another
All made bright by the light of this community
The chalice that we are together.

When each of our lights has been extinguished
May we remember the glow of our shared faith
That we, and only we, can make the world
Better for our children and their children; for
Indeed, there is no one else.

Please now blow your candles out.

Presidents' Fund Offering

Rev. Janamanchi

With this offering you bless the work of IARF for our youth, and with them, for our world.

I now ask Dr. Homi Dhalla and Ms. Kathy Matsui to offer closing words and to extinguish the light.

Closing Words

Dr. Homi Dhalla, Zoroastrian
Ms. Kathy Matsui, Rissho Kosei-kai

We have come together, inspired by those who have come before
They build this community for us, and for the world
It is ours now, to share, to cherish, and to pass on
To those who follow on the path to peace.

May the light of this lamp shine in every heart
That burns for peace and freedom for all.

Rev. Janamanchi

Our young adults will close this service with a blessing of the rhythm of their lives.

Postlude and Recessional

Religious Freedom Youth Network